

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 /100 W

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R 081538Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8841

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7113

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, NI

SUBJECT: THE CA: THE POLEMICS CONTINUE

REF: (A) LAGOS 7030, (B) LAGOS 6975

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PUBLIC RELATIONS BATTLE OVER THE CA'S ADJOURNMENT IS CONTINUING. CHARIMAN UDOMA HAS SUGGESTED THAT MCAS WHO OBJECT TO THE CA'S ADJOURNMENT SHOULD TAKE THEIR CASE TO THE SMC WHILE THE CHAIRMAN'S OPPONENETS ARE CONDEMNING HIS ACTION AND CALLING FOR THE FMG TO LIFT THE BAN ON POLITICS. IT NOW APPEARS THAT UDOMA MAY HAVE ACTED TO HEAD OFF A NORTHERN/EASTERN PACKAGE DEAL ON NEW STATES AND SHARIA. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BATTLE BETWEEN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) CHAIRMAN UDO UDOMA AND MCAS WHO OBJECT TO HIS ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY IS CONTINUING, MARKED BY PUBLIC RELATIONS MANEUVERING ON BOTH SIDES.

2. IN A JUNE 7 INTERVIEW IN LAGOS, UDOMA DEFENDED HIS
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ACTION AND SAID THAT THE NEW STATE CREATION AND SHARIA ISSUES CANNOT BE REOPENED IN THE CA. UDOMA SUGGESTED THAT "THOSE WHO WANT TO REOPEN THEM CAN APPEAL TO THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL." UDOMA ALSO DEFENDED THE PROCEDURES HE USED ON JUNE 5 TO ADJOURN THE ASSEMBLY BY SAYING THAT THE MOTION FOR A THIRD READING WAS PROPERLY MADE BY ALHAJI ABDUL RASAQ (KWARA) AND APPROVED.

THE CHAIRMAN NOTED THAT UNDER STANDING ORDER 44(3) OF THE ASSEMBLY, "NO AMENDMENT OF A MATERIAL CHARACTER SHALL BE PROPOSED (AT THE THIRD READING STAGE) AND ON THIS POINT THE CHAIRMAN'S DECISION SHALL BE FINAL." IN CONCLUSION, UDOMA DENIED THAT THE CA HAD ENDED ABRUPTLY, "IT ENDED ABRUPTLY FOR THOSE WHO WANTED IT TO GO ON INDEFINITELY."

3. MEANWHILE, SIX MCAS WHO OBJECTED TO UDOMA'S ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY INCLUDING JOSEPH WAYAS (CROSS RIVERS), ALHAJI UMARU DIKKO (KADUNA), CHUBA OKADIGBO (ANAMBRA), M.O. UGWU (ANAMBRA), T.E. CHUKWU (IMO), ABUBAKAR USMAN (BENUE), AND D.D. ETIEBET (CROSS RIVER) HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL HALL ATTACKING THE CHAIRMAN'S ACTION. CLAIMING TO SPEAK FOR 101 MCAS, WAYAS SAID, "THE CHAIRMAN'S RULING IS A WRECK (SIC) OF DEMOCRACY CAPABLE OF HAVING GRAVE EFFECTON THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF." OKADIGBO CALLED THE RULING "A RAPE OF THE CONSTITUTION." SOMEWHAT PARADOXICALLY, HOWEVER, WAYAS WNET ON TO URGE THE SMC TO LIFT THE BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITIES NOW THAT THE CA HAS FINISHED ITS DELIBERATIONS ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION.

4. THE DIRECTION IN WHICH UDOMA NOW INTENDS TO PROCEED BECAME SOMEWHAT CLEARER YESTERDAY. IN HIS INTERVIEW, HE SAID THAT LEGAL DRAFSMEN ARE WORKING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PRODUCE A CLEAN COPY OF THE TEXT FOR THE GOVERNMENT PRINTERS WHICH CAN THEN BE CIRCULATED AMONG MEMBERS BEFORE SUBMISSION TO THE FMG. ACCORDING TO PRESS SPECULATION, UDOMA MAY FORMALLY PRESENT THE TEXT SIGNED BY HIMSELF AND ASSEMBLY SECRETARY GIDADO IDRIS TO HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO IN ABOUT SIX WEEKS WITHOUT EVER RECONVENING THE ASSEMBLY. NEVERTHELESS, DEPUTY CA CHAIRMAN JUSTICE BUBA ARDO HAS ASSURED THE MEMBERS THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THEIR SALARIES AND BENEFITS UNTIL THE ASSEMBLY IS FINALLY DISSOLVED FORMALLY.

5. COMMENT: IT IS BEGINNING TO APPEAR TH UDOMA MAY HAVE TERMINATED THE CA TO HEAD OFF INCIPIENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EASTERN AND NORTHERN MCAS WHICH MIGHT HAVE LED TO A PACKAGE DEAL ON SHARIA AND CREATION OF NEW STATES. AS WE REPORTED IN REF A AND AS CONFIRMED IN THE LIST PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE 8 NEW NIGERIAN, THE 92 SIGNERS OF THE JUNE 6 LETTER TO UDOMA WERE THE SAME NORTHERN MCAS WHO SIGNED THE APRIL 18 NORTHERN MANIFESTO. HOWEVER, AT YESTERDAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE, THE MCAS WHO CLAIMED TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF "101 MCAS" WERE PRACTICALLY ALL IBO AND NON-IBO EASTERNERS. SIMILARLY, IN CONVERSA-

TION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER YESTERDAY AT THE CA, MIDDLE
BELT SHARIA OPPONENETS GEORGE HOOMKWAFI AND JOHN CHUWANG
SAID THAT THEY HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT THE POSSIBILITY
OF A DEAL WAS BEING FLOATED. AS CHUWANG OBSERVED, "THE
IBOS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE FOUR
YORUBA STATES AND ONLY TWO IBO STATES." THUS, THE IBOS
MIGHT BE WILLING TO SUPPORT HE NORTH ON SHARIA IN RETURN
FOR TWO MORE STATES IN IBOLAND. FEARING SUCH A DEAL, THEY
SAID, THE MIDDLE BELTERS WERE HAPPY TO GO HOME.

6. IF UDOMA DID ACT TO HEAD OFF A PACKAGE DEAL, WE
WOULD HAVE TO ASSUME THAT HE DID SO WITH THE AGREEMENT
OF THE FMG. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE BATTLE
IT WOULD TAKE TO PUSH SUCH A DEAL THROUGH THE CA AT
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THIS LATE DATE, AND WITH THE MEMORY OF THE APRIL SHARIA
BATTLE STILL FRESH, UDOMA AND THE FMG MAY HAVE CONCLUDED
THAT THE ASSEMBLY COULD NOT AFFORD ANOTHER SUCH SELF-
INFLECTED WOUND. END COMMENT.
WYMAN

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